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November 12, 1986  
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MEMORANDUM FOR: The Deputy Director  
FROM : P - Charles Horner  
SUBJECT : Afghan Media Project - Your meeting with  
Ambassador Deane Hinton, November 12, 1986

YES  
OK 34-NSA  
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Subject for Discussion

Implementation of the Afghan Media Project.

List of Participants

Ambassador Deane Hinton

Background Information

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the status of the Afghan Media Project and the steps being taken to implement it.

You may wish to give Ambassador Hinton a copy of the attached Afghan Media Project - Status Summary, which you can use as talking points.

Released by the  
United States Information Agency  
Under the Freedom of Information  
Act. Date \_\_\_\_\_

MAR 1 1988

## Afghan Media Project - Status Summary

### Significant Points

- o The Hearst Corporation has decided not to continue participation in the Afghan Media Project beyond the term of its present grant which expires 12/31/86.
- o Boston University has offered to put together a consortium under an expanded BU grant from USIA to cover remaining Hearst responsibilities and implement the project immediately. Consortium members will include The Mercy Fund, a private humanitarian organization with current projects in Pakistan, and MediaPrompt, Inc., a broadcast journalism consulting firm which has worked with Group W. Westinghouse Broadcasting President, William Baker, is also interested in bringing together major broadcast media and journalism executives to work privately with BU as consultants to the new Afghan News Service (ANS).
- o..Funding of a limited Afghan News Service operation for a 12-month period, as required by the GOP, has been finalized. Funds for a scaled-down news service will come from FY86 grant funds and a \$500K FY87 USIA allocation. The ANS can proceed with an estimated \$365K operating budget. (This information has been furnished to the post.)
- o Additional funds beyond the FY86 grants and a planned FY87 USIA \$500K allocation are necessary to cover start-up and operating expenses for a full ANS operation as outlined in the Hearst 1986 trip report. The Agency is seeking these additional funds (\$700K) from AID. GC is currently working with AID lawyers to resolve doubts on AID funding participation in the project.
- o Under GC and M/K guidance, P/DH will negotiate operational details with BU to begin the project in Pakistan as soon as possible. USIS Islamabad has been informed of the current status of the project. The Post has also been asked to comment on implementation of the project and to use its good offices with the GOP to resolve the current issue surrounding the appointment of an ANS director and encourage the steps necessary leading to announcement of the establishment of the ANS in Pakistan.
- o Nick Mills, an accomplished photojournalist employed by BU to participate in the training program in Pakistan, has been sent by BU to confer with Embassy, USIS and others concerned with the project. Mills is expected to arrive in Islamabad on November 11. The BU trip plan calls for Mills to do as much preparatory work as possible for the start-up of the training in January 1987.

## Background

### The Hearst Corporation

o For several months, particularly since Hearst Project Director Charles Shutt's return from Pakistan in August, Hearst management has been increasingly concerned over the continuing delay in starting up the project in Pakistan, the published reports of the on-campus controversy at BU on the resignation of Dean Redmont, and the arrest of Nicholas Daniloff in Moscow.

o Further, Michael Gartner, Editor of The Courier-Journal and The Louisville Times and current President of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, sent an accusatory letter to the President of King Features concerning its participation in USIA's Afghan Media Project. The Gartner letter was also said to have been distributed to Board members of the Association and to other journalists, causing Hearst management further consternation.

o At a meeting with the Deputy Director held on October 21, Bruce Paisner, the Executive VP of King Features Syndicate, and Charles Shutt made it clear that Hearst had decided to terminate its connection with the Afghan Media Project when its current grant expires on December 31, 1986. Hearst indicated that it will continue to work diligently on the project until the grant expires and will cooperate with the Agency on the program thereafter. Hearst expects that by December 31, work will be finished on a press packet for about 500 potential media clients of the ANS and that it will complete the over-all blueprint for both the establishment of the Afghan News Service (ANS) in Pakistan, and the marketing and distribution network for ANS media products.

### Funding

o The current grants to Hearst (\$309,000) and to BU (\$180,000) were issued on July 1 for a 6-month period ending December 31 based upon proposals from both organizations. The Hearst responsibilities include organizational structure for the ANS, production techniques and the design and development of a marketing and distribution network for media products worldwide.

o Grantee project directors visited Pakistan in July and reported back on a budget requirement imposed by the GOP for a minimum 1-year operation. This budget reflected a shortfall over the 12-month period in start-up and operating expenses of approximately \$700,000.

o The Agency sought assistance from the NSC and Congress to provide the necessary additional funds. To date, it appears that the AID front office is in agreement to lend funding support to the project provided certain perceived legal impediments are resolved. GC is currently working with the AID lawyers to resolve this situation.

o A review of the grantee trip report budget and an analysis of the funds available under both the current grants and the \$500K to be made available from USIA FY87 funds, has determined that the program can proceed with a scaled down version of the ANS as originally contemplated by Hearst and the GOP. In the event funds are provided from other sources outside of USIA for the program, a revised operational budget for the full ANS can be developed.

#### **Boston University Consortium**

o After notification of Hearst's desire not to continue participation in the project beyond its current grant ending December 31, BU expressed an interest in an expanded grant program to pick up those areas of responsibility which Hearst could not complete on the implementation side. P/DH determined that Group W (Westinghouse Broadcasting And Cable, Inc.) and MediaPrompt, Inc., which submitted a concept paper to participate in the project last year, appear interested in joining with BU as consultants in a consortium arrangement to implement the project.

o The Mercy Fund, a non-profit Washington-based humanitarian organization with ongoing Afghan projects in Pakistan has also expressed interest in joining the consortium. Mercy Fund participation will allow for private sector funding to be infused into the project, thus enabling the Agency to carry out the intent of Congress and turn the program over to the private sector after a limited expenditure of public funds. The Mercy Fund is willing to provide facilities immediately for the ANS in Peshawar at no cost to facilitate the program. The Mercy Fund national advisory board includes Senators Humphrey, Bradley, Dodd, Simon and Wallop as well as the President of the German Afghanistan Committee and the President of the Afghan Community in America. The Mercy Fund's international connections are also advantageous to the ultimate structure of the ANS.

o MediaPrompt, Inc. is a broadcast training and consulting organization run by two veteran network news broadcasters. President David Horowitz, formerly of CBS, ABC and Satellite News Channel has extensive experience in managing broadcast projects and supervising and training broadcast news teams. Ken Alvord, EO, is a former NBC-TV news reporter and anchor who has taught broadcast journalism at prestigious universities and has organized and trained personnel for a broadcast project overseas. He has excellent academic and journalism contacts and experience, particularly in the print journalism area. MediaPrompt joined with Group W Satellite Communications in a recent proposal to USIA-TV to conduct a 6-week workshop for TV professionals from the PRC.

cc: P/D - JMoshier  
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